



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – John M. Colmers, Secretary

Dear Parents,

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is following new recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) related to H1N1 (swine) flu and school closures. Specifically, CDC has recommended – and DHMH agrees – that it is no longer necessary to close schools because of H1N1 influenza, unless there is so much faculty or student absenteeism that it interferes with the school's ability to function.

This new recommendation does not mean the end of H1N1 influenza. DHMH continues to monitor cases of H1N1 flu, and parents should remain alert to possible signs of the flu in their children. These signs include:

- Fever (a temperature more than 100° F or 37.8° C) **AND** cough, sore throat, runny nose, or nasal stuffiness
- Other symptoms can include body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, or, occasionally, vomiting and diarrhea

If your child has these symptoms, contact your doctor and the school. Parents are urged to keep sick children at home, unless your healthcare provider has requested to see the child. Make sure you call ahead to the doctor, so that your doctor can protect your child and others. Please do not send your child to school or daycare. If someone in your home is sick, keep him or her away from those who are not sick.

Children who may have the flu should be kept home for 7 days, even if they are feeling better. If they are not better by Day 7, they should be kept home until they have been well and fever-free for at least 24 hours.

The following are things you can do to reduce the chances of getting the H1N1 (swine) flu:

- Teach your children to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cough and sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of their elbow. Tissues should be discarded after a single use and hands washed.
- Teach your children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- Children who are sick should stay home from school or daycare and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Check your children, and school faculty and staff should also self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.

Toll Free 1-877-4MD-DHMH • TTY for Disabled - Maryland Relay Service 1-800-735-2258

Web Site: www.dhmh.state.md.us

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please report the absence to your child's school. It is very important, during an outbreak such as this, for the school to have accurate information about absences.

Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to keep your child/children safe at school. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your school or local health department. **You can also contact the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at 1-877-633-5848 (1-877-MDFLU4U), or the website, swineflu.maryland.gov.**